



Most Rev Anthony Randazzo
Bishop of Broken Bay

Message for BBNeighbourhoods
8 December 2020

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

One hundred and fifty years ago today, Pope Pius IX proclaimed Saint Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church. We know Saint Joseph primarily through what we read in the Sacred Scriptures. In Matthew's Gospel we discover that Joseph was from the House of David and can trace his family all the way back to Abraham and Sarah (Matthew 1:1-17). We are told that Joseph lived in Nazareth (Luke 2:4), was betrothed to Mary (Matthew 1:18), and went to Bethlehem to be registered in the census ordered by the Emperor Augustus (Luke 2:1-5).

Joseph is known to be an honourable and righteous man who was sensitive to the needs of Mary and the child Jesus. He was discerning and obedient to the will of God. Joseph offered protection to the Holy Family when they were vulnerable, and he provided for their care. Saint Matthew describes Jesus as the son of the carpenter. The word used by Matthew in Greek is "tekton" which refers to an artisan who works with wood, stone, and iron. Saint Joseph was clearly a man of craft and talent.

For centuries, Saint Joseph has been sought as an intercessor and protector. He is often referred to as the guardian of the family, the patron of unborn children, fathers, immigrants, workers, pilgrims, carpenters, and engineers. In our Catholic tradition, Saint Joseph is called upon for help by those who struggle against doubt and hesitation. His intercession is also sought for a happy death.

As we commemorate the 150th anniversary of the universal patronage of Saint Joseph, I would like to announce an initiative for our Diocese beginning today. After much prayer, thought, and consultation, I have decided to initiate a house of discernment for young men which will be called "Joseph House." It will be located at Willoughby not far from the Church of Saint Thomas. Further details will be released in the coming months. It is also my desire to initiate a house of discernment for young women in the Diocese. Please pray for the success of both initiatives.

Last week I announced the transfer of 20 of the clergy within the Diocese. This is no surprise to you, of course, because I have previously requested your prayers as I discerned and prayed for our priests and our parishes. I am delighted to say that when I spoke to each of the priests and deacon, they all responded with generosity and gratitude. I am not surprised by their response, as I have come to know our clergy as good, faithful men who are willing to serve God and you, God's holy people. Please support and pray for these fine men as they conclude their time in various communities and prepare to serve others in the mission.

For the couple of people who have expressed their disappointment at these transfers, please remember that we are ordained for the service of the whole community of the Church, and each of us knows what is expected of us when a need arises. Please remember that each of us made a promise of obedience when we were ordained. We do not need people urging us to be disobedient or to be stingy with our gifts or generosity. That is contrary to the spirit of the Gospel and is not the spirit of our community of the Church. I would ask you to be as generous in your acceptance of these transfers as the clergy themselves have been.

We are fast approaching Christmas, and my thoughts and prayers are very much with those who have been especially burdened by the events and challenges of this year. Might I encourage all of us in Broken Bay to be alert to the particular needs of others at this time. With government restrictions being eased and larger numbers of people being able to attend churches for Mass, worship, and prayer, we need to keep up our vigilance for those who might find it a challenge to return to the church space. Don't be frightened to reach out to others, you may be the face of Christ for them this Christmas.

Thank you for all that you do in our community of the Church. May God bless you and your families abundantly.

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